

Minutes of the NEWTON UPPER FALLS AREA COUNCIL

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 20, this will be an Online/Telephone Meeting

Participation Details:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/714158912>

Meeting ID: 714 158 912

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Meeting ID: 714 158 912

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ani0ErE3g>

April 21, 2022

7:00 p.m.

Council Members of NUFAC in attendance:

Anil Adyanthaya (President)

Jeff Riklin (Vice President)

Jay Werb (Treasurer)

Jack Neville

Patty Connolly

Kathaleen Brearley

Julie Irish

Marie Jackson

Matt Lai

Also in attendance:

Councilor Bill Humphrey

Carol Stapleton, Dept of Parks and Recreation

Meeting commenced at 7:05PM

• **Approval of Minutes from March Meeting (5 minutes)**

Patty C. Motioned to Approve, and Marie J. seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting. All 8 council members voted to approve the minutes as was submitted.

• **Treasurer's Report (5 minutes)** There were no changes to the balance as reported by the Treasurer

• **Public Comment/Questions?** No comments

- **Zoning Redesign ‘Community Engagement Network’ Update (5 minutes)**

The Planning Dept is piloting this network to communicate with constituents throughout the city and 2 members of NUFAC volunteered to join the Network (Jay Werb and Julie Irish)

Julie reported that following her phone interviews,

the first meeting will be on May 17th to learn more about the process.

Kat Kemmett is the Planning staff member who interviewed volunteers.

- **ARPA Funding Ideas for Upper Falls Update (10 minutes)**

Anil Drafted a letter, including three suggestions for use of leftover ARPA funds

1. Improvements to the (future) Pocket Park adjacent to Pettee Square:

Chestnut St@Linden.

2. Electric power sources accessible in Pettee Square: other villages have suggested this might be a good use of the funds

3. Wifi (FIOS) in Emerson Community Center to allow for hybrid meetings of the NUFAC and maintain community attendance at the monthly meetings

Some additional ideas for use of the leftover funds were:

Improvements to Braceland Playground, the proposed steps off the Greenway to the riverbank and Road improvements. Councilor Humphrey reported that the City Council just voted (April 20) to impose new expectations on Utility companies to cover additional road improvements following completion of their recent work. Councilor Humphrey also noted that The Public Facilities Committee jurisdictionally oversees these improvements. There was discussion about funds for much needed road repairs and whether a ‘slush’ budget was included in the Northland deal, and if fencing on the Upper Falls Greenway could be funded out of that. Carol S. said she would check on that. The existing state grant for the Pettee Square redesign project funded the design only, not the actual project implementation. Councilor Humphrey reported that the design phase is complete, and money has been spent. A granite slab from the wall on High St @ Pettee St needs to be removed from the sidewalk and Carol said she would talk to the Emerson School Condominium property manager to resolve.

Councilor Humphrey reported that there was a fund put aside when Emerson School closed. He wondered if he should talk to the Comptroller and Newton IT about resolving this need for wifi in Emerson with any remaining funds.

- **Braceland Park River Access (10 minutes)**

Jay W. presented the following maps of his proposed river walk and conducted this walk with staff from the Planning Dept (Luis). His initial proposal is to install a gate at the fence for pedestrian use of this public land along the river. He also suggested that this could be accomplished with no cost incurred on to the city, and would open up the riverside path to pedestrian access along the river all the way to Eliot St.



- **No Parking Signs and Rules on Oak Street (10 minutes)**

Three new signs have been installed on Oak St from the All Star Liquors store up to the Post Office. There are two concerns expressed by the Council: unnecessary signs polluting the sidewalk area and the Neighborhood Area Council not being consulted prior to installation. Anil reported that the Traffic Council might have this on the agenda for an upcoming meeting due to conflicting traffic regulations.

During the Pettee Square redesign discussions, the Upper Falls Area Council proposed that bollards be installed on the sidewalk rather than parking signs.

Jeff R and Jack N asked Councilor Humphrey if he would follow up with the Traffic Council to see if NUFAC can be notified about these kind of changes happening in Upper Falls in the future, and to find out the reasoning the three new 'no parking signs' along the sidewalk in front of 81 Oak St. Councilor Humphrey has already reported to Anil and Jack about this on April 12 after his discussion with the Traffic Council. The Traffic Council is prioritizing the No parking regulation at this point, but there are 2 or 3 conflicting regulations at play. Jason Sobel reported to Councilor Humphrey regarding Indiana Terrace, Chestnut Street and Oak St, and the Traffic Council will docket an item regarding Oak St. They may want to change it again to be consistent with the parking regulations on all three streets.

- **Upper Falls Depot (10 minutes)**

Jack Neville, as President of the Upper Falls CDC, reported to the council about the The Depot Coffee Shop, which has been closed since 2021. The current business owner is planning to retire so a new tenant is needed. Jeff, Jack, Anil (acting as clerk) and Lee Fisher (acting as treasurer) are the members of the CDC looking to find a new tenant and will go forward with an RFP that might take up to two months to post.

- **Pocket Park Near Upper Falls Greenway (10 minutes)**

- a) **Replacing Picnic Table Umbrellas**

Umbrellas should be taken down in weather with high winds and wrapped with a tie for to prevent them from breaking. Newton Community Pride was the group responsible for installing the umbrellas there.

- **Discussion of proposed marijuana dispensary at 1185 Chestnut Street (10 minutes)**

- a) **Public Hearing to be Assigned for May 3, 2022:** Nuestra will petition The Land Use Committee with a request approval for a permit that includes waivers on multiple parking, lighting, and other regulations at the site.

- **Recording of Area Council Meetings (10 minutes)**

There was a discussion about the rules on meeting recordings and what the benefits and drawbacks would be to retain recordings of these meetings. Anil will consult the appropriate City Legal counsel on this matter to see the limits and requirements.

- **General Upper Falls News (5 minutes)**

-Jay continued the conversation from last month regarding the monthly meetings with the Northland Liaison Committee and will post reminders about the meeting if anyone wants to attend.

-The Walk Through Time will take place on May 7th 1-3pm. This self-guided tour around Upper Falls will start at the Depot or The Echo Bridge Mall and end at the pop-up market at Dun Gaherins with volunteers stationed at each of the points on the walk.

- Jerry Reilly reported that Sunday September 11, 2022 will be the next Feast of the Falls

-Jeff reported the following updates on behalf of the Historic Commission:

- 300 Elliot is now under construction; groundwork and pipes to the carriage house
- 13-19 Winter St: The framing is pretty much complete, and interior work will begin soon. The surveyor has confirmed that the new structure is within one inch of the height approved by the Historic Commission.
- Seta Der Hohannesian's house at 14 Summer Street was sold and the new owner will have a challenge getting permit approval for their proposed addition to the back of the property given that there is a 25' set back required from Spring St.
- 959 Chestnut Street is still failing to submit a feasible plan to comply with the required height.

- Jeff R. motioned to adjourn the April meeting and Katie B. seconded the motion.
- **Public Comment/Questions?** There were no further comments at this point in the meeting
- **Adjourn** The meeting adjourned at 8:45PM

The location of this meeting is wheelchair accessible and reasonable accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities who require assistance. If you need a reasonable accommodation, please contact the city of Newton's ADA/Sec. 504 Coordinator, Jini Fairley, at least two business days in advance of the meeting: jfairley@newtonma.gov or (617) 796-1253. The city's TTY/TDD direct line is: 617-796-1089. For the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), please dial 711.